What were the effects of the Spanish on the Americas?

The Spanish conquistadors’ conquest of the Americas is one of the greatest stories in history- it all began in the 16th century when Christopher Columbus wanted to find a quicker way to Asia, but instead he discovered new land. After the conquest, life in the Americas changed drastically. Firstly, the native Mayans, Aztecs and Incas were killed, spared to become slaves for the Europeans or used to spread the message of Christianity. Colonies were established on the coasts of Central and South America and more Spanish moved there to exploit their resources, for example: gold, tobacco, slaves, tomatoes, corn and potatoes. They were easily colonized because of many reasons such as: technology of the Spanish (guns), their loss of land, no immunity to diseases (influenza and Smallpox) and laws which went against their culture (no more ceremonies). The Spanish saw this land as a new opportunity with valuable resources and no army.

Soon after the Spanish settlement was established, 2 men named Hernan Cortes and Pedro de Alcarado y Contreras helped conquer more land as their colony flourished. Some tribes had guns, so that they could kill their enemies and unintentionally help the Spanish. Children were forced into the European education and people started speaking Spanish. Trade was created, for example: they build ports where cargo ships brought in other resources and markets where they could exchange guns for tobacco or other rare materials. Therefore trade (economical effect) and religion (social effect) were main effects of the Spanish in America as the ‘Indians’ were killed or forced to become Christians.

One of the main social effects of the Spanish on the Americas was that they forced them to entirely change their culture and religion. The Spanish were very extreme in their Catholicism and their message to spread it around the world, so when they saw the Mayans sacrificing other peoples’ hearts, they put an end to it. The Mayan kings and people would be forced to turn into Christians, otherwise they would be killed- all of their manuscripts were burnt too. The language of the Mayans, Incas and Aztecs was slowly being replaces by Spanish as children learnt the European education. Spanish men married the native women and gave birth to children that were called Mestizos. For example: children were taught to read the bible, they were educated and they spoke Spanish. To conclude, the Spanish brought more than horses and education to the New World and their religion has a very important part to play as it was one of the reasons for their expansion. Some places in America have San in front of them are key reminder of their Christianity as San means Saint.

New settlements are the final environmental effects of the Spanish on the Americas. They started building churches and buildings as there were flat lands and cool climate. People changed their ideas and trade was very important. Many conquistadors settled in South America and brought in goods from other countries using ports and large cargo ships. Houses were built in small neighborhoods and churches were very important to study and learn the bible. Therefore, the Spanish had many effect on the Americas- some good and others bad, but it will always remain a crucial part of our world history.